

Appropriations Committee—Human Services Subcommittee
Public Hearing on the Governor's Budget Adjustments
February 11, 2010

Good evening. I am Ardith Crampton, Manager of Eastern CT Health Network's Family Development Center and Nurturing Families Network Program. I am here to oppose the severe cut to the Children's Trust Fund and children's programs proposed in the Governor's recent Budget Adjustments. I have appeared before you in the past, describing the virtues of the Nurturing Families Network.

Briefly, via intensive home visiting to first-time parents, Nurturing Families Network:

- Reduces the incidence of child abuse and neglect from 20-25% in the target population to 1-3%
- Increases employment and education rates of enrolled families, leading to self-sufficiency
- Significantly increases the child immunization rate for participating children; helps families to find and utilize primary health care providers

NFN is a **prevention** program. Research on abuse prevention shows that savings range from a short-term investment of \$1 for every \$1 invested, rising to \$6 over the long term. It **prevents** families from taxing the child welfare and protective service systems. It **prevents** unemployment. It **prevents** reliance on emergency rooms for basic medical care. NFN home visits cost just over \$3,000 per year, compared with \$30,000 for each substantiated DCF case and over \$44,000 for each inmate in Connecticut's correctional system.

In December, we were asked to comment on job impact, should Children's Trust Fund programs be cut. In the Nurturing Families Network program alone, there are 250 jobs. The number for all Children's Trust Fund programs is approximately 350. A cut of 30%, the net effect of the Governor's proposal, plus elimination of the non-hospital sites, would eliminate approximately 200 jobs. Result: increased filing for unemployment benefits, reduction in state income tax revenues from those unemployed, loss of health insurance for their families. Further, without the help from NFN workers for families to continue their schooling, find employment, and enroll in HUSKY, many of them would remain among the unemployed and uninsured, requiring state aid.

Reliance on further spending cuts will not repair our budget. During the current recession, basic needs are increasing, just as required resources are decreasing. Increased poverty and stress lead to more child abuse, neglect, and domestic violence—and to more state monies spent for DCF and correctional services. Never have the Children's Trust Fund's prevention programs been more critical. I urge the balanced approach suggested by the Better Choices for Connecticut Coalition. It includes revenue options that would allow us to preserve vital services for our most vulnerable citizens. Please do not approve Governor Rell's Budget Adjustments. Preserve Children's Trust Fund and other children's programs.

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